Brooklyn Law School est. 1901

The Road Ahead

Dean Nicholas W. Allard | July 2013



One year ago I became your Dean, and what a year it's been. There is something about anniversaries that prompts one to take stock of the past and think about the future. This note will be the first of regular communications from me to you to discuss opportunities and challenges for our Law School.

First, I thank the entire Brooklyn Law School community for the warm welcome that Marla and I have received and for the incredible support and encouragement from our students, faculty, staff, alumni, trustees, and the local legal and civic community. I also acknowledge and extend my gratitude

to Dean and President Emerita Joan Wexler, who enhanced this institution beyond measure. It is an incredible privilege to serve and be part of our great Law School.

A Look Back

Together, we have accomplished a good deal this past year. Consider, for example:

- the announcement of the first accelerated two-year J.D. program in the New York metro area:
- the creation of a Washington, D.C. semester immersion program;
- the launch of our **Business Boot Camp** over intersession break;
- the development of a two-year fellowship-in-practice program for third-year students;
- the addition of a new dual degree program with Pratt Institute;
- the expansion of our **externships** and **Clinical Education Program**, which are among the country's most comprehensive and best for practical training;
- recognition of our *Journal of Law & Policy* as **the most cited policy-related law journal** by courts in the last eight years;
- the launch of *Practicum*, an online companion to the Law School's four scholarly print journals;
- our strong commitment to the community, as reflected in the **Brooklyn Sandy Relief Legal** Clinic and new pro bono and volunteer opportunities;
- extraordinary student accomplishments, faculty scholarship and prominence, and alumni accolades;
- enhanced intellectual discourse and networking opportunities through a packed schedule of academic and alumni events; and,
- so much more.

These accomplishments only happen because of the talent, hard work, and dedication of many people, and the groundwork done well before I arrived. They give us good reason to be proud and also to be optimistic that we can overcome the unprecedented issues facing legal education. We know that we can become an even better Law School. One thing that I've learned about Brooklyn Law School – both in its long history and over this past year – is that it rises to challenges, that adversity makes it stronger.

Addressing Change Head-On

As we all know, the legal profession is on the brink of fundamental and breathtaking change. None of us has a crystal ball, but I'm sure the future for our graduates will bear little resemblance to the past.

Legal institutions and what lawyers do with their education will change radically and at incredible speed in the span of our new graduates' professional lives – more so than during the *entire* period from when common law cases were first recorded on animal skins up to the present time. As I said in my **remarks to the graduating class of 2013**, it's a daunting, exhilarating time to begin a career in law, wherever it might take you, on paths as yet uncharted.

In the broader view, changes in the legal profession are being driven by external factors beyond our control, such as a lingering weak economy, globalization, and disruptive new technology. All law schools are affected by them. These are the trends shaping and transforming the new world of law.

This is not the time to be old-fashioned. We all know that there are issues that need to be addressed head-on. Our approach must be and will be to encourage vigorous discussion and thorough consideration. There will be disagreement and even controversy. But in the end, business as usual is not an option, and we must move ahead.

We Can and Must Do Even Better

In my **Commencement address** I talked about the issue that looms largest: jobs. We can and must do even better. We are reorganizing our entire career and professional development operation. We have enhanced alumni assistance to graduates, are planning to extend public service graduate fellowships, and are implementing other measures to help recent alumni begin meaningful careers.

We see that the demand for legal services is expanding in areas such as alternative dispute resolution, compliance and risk management, financial regulation, health, communication and internet law, and privacy and data security, to name a few. And more than ever, providing affordable legal services to individuals and small businesses remains a pressing need. These opportunities result from the changing legal landscape.

By understanding, embracing, and responding to such trends, we can anticipate how to adapt ourselves and prepare our students to thrive in the new world that is taking shape. We need to help students find where jobs *will be*, rather than where they once were.

Brooklyn Ready

In fact, as lawyers and educators, we owe it to our students – and the professional legal community we serve – to prepare our students to become productive members of a 21st century workforce.

We must continue to provide our students with a first-rate legal education that prepares them to be practicing lawyers in the real world the day they graduate. I am certain we will succeed because of our faculty's outstanding dedication and expertise.



Our graduates will continue to become leaders in government, business, and private practice because they have the skills and background to tackle difficult legal questions on day one – and on any other day, for many years to come.

In other words, when our students graduate, they are ready. In fact, they are "Brooklyn Ready."

Brooklyn Ready means being able to handle any curveball that a world of change throws your way, being able to answer tough questions, and forging solutions to new problems that no one has thought of yet.

Brooklyn Ready also means leveraging and embracing our Borough – the best laboratory in the world in which to experience and study law. We are a stand-alone law school, but hardly alone – the only law school in the heart of downtown Brooklyn's renaissance and part of a vibrant community. Our students give as much as they get, and they get a lot by giving. The **current issue of** *BLS LawNotes* highlights this symbiotic relationship and the incredible innovations it yields.

Five Specific Goals

In the year ahead, I will be focusing on five specific goals to help strengthen the Law School, and I need your help:

- 1. building on our reputation in the legal and academic community;
- 2. significantly improving job prospects for our students and recent alumni;
- 3. assuring that students are prepared to pass the bar;
- 4. launching the most comprehensive program for training students to become lawyers for new businesses in the U.S.; and,
- 5. increasing alumni participation by objective metrics.

To the last point, it is particularly essential that we continue to cultivate meaningful alumni involvement with our students. These partnerships are necessary to increase job opportunities, strengthen professional development, enhance teaching, and generate the revenue necessary to ensure our margin of excellence.

On this final note, I am simply overwhelmed to report that 53 percent of the BLS Class of 2013 has made a gift to our Law School, shattering all previous BLS records. Our youngest alumni class is leading the way to the future through an unprecedented investment in the Law School, which is an inspiration to us all. *BEAU GESTE!*

An Open Door

I will continue in the year ahead, as I have done in the past 12 months, to make myself available to hear and learn from you. I am always eager to listen and talk about any topics that may be on your mind, such as finances, litigation, jobs, curriculum, and governance. And my door is always open to you, just as it always has been in my first year as Dean.

So as we move resolutely forward, we will build an even stronger modern law school by working together, while staying true to our ideals and enduring traditions.

I look forward to working with you on our future accomplishments and innovations.

Thank you for your support of Brooklyn Law School.